MALEDICTION
PART ONE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

FATHER ISAAC KENAN is walking along the sidewalk. He looks intent, with the bible in hand. He is clearly on a mission. He stops at the front gate of a house and looks at it, his eyes fierce with determination. He passes the front gate to the door.

He takes a deep breath, then lifts his hand to the door and knocks.

The door opens, only cracked at first, and an obscured face is seen looking out at Father Kenan.

ELIZABETH
Father Kenan?

FATHER KENAN
Yes.

The door opens completely to reveal ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

ELIZABETH
Oh, God. Thank you. Please, come in.

She pulls the door open completely and motions Father Kenan inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

DEREK JOHNSON is sitting on his couch, looking concerned. He looks up to see his wife and Father Kenan entering. He stands up immediately.

ELIZABETH
Derek. This is Father Kenan.

DEREK
It’s great to meet you, Father. We’re glad you’re here.

FATHER KENAN
Of course. I’m God’s servant. I am here to fight the forces of darkness. Let us waste no time. Where is the child?

ELIZABETH
In his bedroom. Would you like to see him?

FATHER KENAN
If you would bring him out here. His bedroom will be too personal. I'd like to examine him, then I'd like to ask both of you some questions.

Elizabeth nods and leaves the living room to fetch the child. There is silence as Father Kenan wanders the living room, looking around.

Derek watches him, noticeably awkward.

Elizabeth reenters the room with CHARLIE, Elizabeth's son, and walks him over to the couch. Derek immediately walks over to his wife and Charlie to help.

ELIZABETH
I've got it.

Derek doesn't say anything but backs off, giving a sad nod. Elizabeth gets to the couch and sits Charlie down.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Charlie. There's someone here to see you. Someone here that can help you feel better.

Father Kenan walks over to Charlie and kneels in front of him.

FATHER KENAN
Hello, Charlie. My name is Isaac Kenan. I'm here to talk to you.

CHARLIE
I had a dream about you.

FATHER KENAN
Did you? What other dreams do you have?

CHARLIE
A man. I can't see his face. But I know he's there.

Charlie leans over in pain. He breathes deeply.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
It hurts so bad.

ELIZABETH
Are you okay, honey?

CHARLIE
I don’t feel good.

FATHER KENAN
Tell me what you feel?

CHARLIE
My stomach. My insides. They burn. Everything burns. It feels like someone’s pushing my insides.

FATHER KENAN
I need to perform a few tests. Would that be okay, Charlie?

Charlie nods. Father Kenan performs a Hail Mary. Father Kenan then closes his eyes, as though he’s concentrating. Images of a shadowy figure pop in Father Kenan’s mind briefly and his eyes open immediately.

FATHER KENAN (CONT’D)
How often do you dream, Charlie?

CHARLIE
I don’t know.

FATHER KENAN
That’s okay. Is it always the same dream?

CHARLIE
Yes. He’s just in the distance, just watching me, I think.

FATHER KENAN
Has he ever spoken to you?

CHARLIE
No. I don’t think so. But...

Charlie stops for a moment, thinking hard.

CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Sometimes, I think it sounds like he’s trying to talk. But I can’t hear what he’s saying.

FATHER KENAN
Okay.

Father Kenan gets up, takes a few steps away, clearly thinking. Charlie grabs his stomach.

CHARLIE
It hurts. It hurts.

Father Kenan turns back to the boy.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Why does it hurt?

ELIZABETH
Baby?

Charlie is now doubled over, in pain, taking deep breaths. Father Kenan watches the boy intently. Suddenly, the pain seems to stop, but the breathing is still deep and intense. Slowly, Charlie lifts his head up to look at the priest.

CHARLIE
(demonic voice #1)
Are you here for the child?

Elizabeth starts to cry. Derek's expression is one of sheer terror. Father Kenan doesn't take his eyes off the boy.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(demonic voice #1)
I asked you, are you here for the child?

FATHER KENAN
Yes.

CHARLIE
(demonic voice #1)
Do you want to play with us? Little Charlie and me?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie is asleep on the couch. Father Kenan is standing over Charlie's sleeping form, saying silent prayers. Derek and Elizabeth are standing next to each other.

Father Kenan stops his prayers and then walks over to the couple.

FATHER KENAN
I have questions for both of you.

DEREK
Of course.

FATHER KENAN
When did this start?

ELIZABETH
Last year. A few weeks after the wedding.

FATHER KENAN
Wedding?

ELIZABETH
This isn't Charlie's father. Derek and I got married after. Charlie's father and I... We just weren't for each other. And he...

DEREK
He was a dead beat.

FATHER KENAN
I see. Did you and Charlie have a strained relationship?

Derek goes to speak but Elizabeth interrupts.

ELIZABETH
No. Charlie liked Derek. He was even excited when we told him that Derek and I were getting married.

FATHER KENAN
Has it always been this bad?

ELIZABETH
Not at first. He just complained that he didn't feel good. But it didn't get any better. We took him to see doctors. When they couldn't find anything wrong with him physically, we took him to a counsellor. She just told us that he was probably having a hard time adjusting. But then...

Elizabeth trails off.

DEREK
He started acting differently. And saying things he would never say otherwise. And... You heard his voice.

ELIZABETH
We called the church. They were the only ones we could think of. I'm a Christian woman, but I haven't been a practicing Christian for years. But now...

FATHER KENAN
You've seen the evil that lurks this world is just as real as the good. The church, they sent representatives?

ELIZABETH
Yes. And they tried all sorts of things. Rituals, prayer, holy water. And it didn't help. He got worse.

FATHER KENAN
I see.

ELIZABETH
One of the priests told us it was almost as though someone was purposefully preventing them from completing the exorcism.

Her eyes almost unconsciously glance at Derek. He notices and tries to hide his sorrow.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
But, I thought there was no hope left, when I found a slip of paper one day with your name, and number on it. I saw the name Father Isaac Kenan, and I called the number. It was an answer to my prayers.

FATHER KENAN
I've been doing freelance exorcism for years now. The differences I have with the church are my methods. But I will promise you this, my methods, while not conventional, are effective.

He looks from Elizabeth to Derek, then back to Elizabeth.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
I need to know that you're going to allow me to practice my method. If you care about your son, you need to allow me to do this my way.

Elizabeth nods without hesitation.

DEREK
What do you need from us?

FATHER KENAN
We'll see.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Father Kenan sets up his crucifix. He eyes the boy, who is still lying down. Father Kenan then closes his eyes.

FATHER KENAN
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Charlie's eyes shoot open.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
Most glorious Prince of the Heavenly Armies, Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in our battle against principalities and powers, against the rules of this world of darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.

Charlie sits up and stares at Father Kenan, who is deep in prayer still.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
In the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, strengthened by the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of our Savior, of Blessed Michael the Archangel, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and all the Saints, and powerful in the holy authority of my ministry, we confidently undertake to repulse the attacks and deceits of the devil.

Charlie's breathing becomes very intense. He has an expression of pure vitriol as he watches Father Kenan.

EXT. "FOREST" - DAY

Father Kenan is calming walking through the forest. He looks around as he walks, keeping an eye out for something.

Ahead he sees Charlie running and disappearing behind trees.

He continues ahead, after Charlie, but at the same pace he'd already been walking. Seeing the boy appear and disappear he walks until he comes to a clearing, where Charlie is sitting down, his back to Father Kenan.

Father Kenan approaches Charlie.

FATHER KENAN
(calmly)
Charlie?

Slowly, Charlie turns around to look at Father Kenan. His expression is miserable.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
Is that you, Charlie?

Charlie doesn't respond. Then, his entire expression changes into one of rage and he opens his mouth widely, emitting an inhuman SCREAM.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Elizabeth is in the, doing dishes. Derek is behind her, leaning against a counter. He watches her timidly. Finally, Elizabeth starts to cry. Derek notices her and walks up behind her, putting his hands on her shoulders.

ELIZABETH
I want this to be over.

DEREK
I know, baby.

ELIZABETH
I'm scared.

DEREK
I understand. But we're going to fix this. We're going to make everything better.

ELIZABETH
We?

She scoffs with a hint of disgust.

DEREK
Come on, Liz. I'm trying.

ELIZABETH
Do you know what this is like for me? Do you know what I've gone through?

DEREK
Of course I do.

ELIZABETH
Sometimes I wonder if completely cutting out Richard was the right thing to do?

DEREK
It was supposed to be a good wake up call for him. He's an idiot.

ELIZABETH
But he's Charlie's father.

DEREK
No matter what's going on, cutting Richard out of the equation was the best thing you could have done for Charlie.

Elizabeth looks at Derek with an uncertain look.

ELIZABETH
He's a good father.

DEREK
That's not everything.

Elizabeth doesn't reply. She simply stands still, waiting.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Father Kenan opens his eyes. Across from him, Charlie is asleep once again. He stands up, looking at Charlie keenly. He then turns his attention away.

INT. KITCHEN

As Derek and Elizabeth are still standing next to each other, Father Kenan comes into the room. They both turn their attention to him.

FATHER KENAN
He's much deeper into this than I'd previously anticipated.
(MORE)

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
This is going to take a lot more than a simple exorcism.

Both Derek and Elizabeth look at him, as though they are waiting for bad news.

DEREK
What do you mean?

FATHER KENAN
I need to try something much more powerful. It’s something I rarely do, because there is a lot of risk. But it’s necessary this time.

ELIZABETH
What do you need us to do?

FATHER KENAN
Are you prepared to make sacrifices? Are you ready to do whatever it takes to save your son?

ELIZABETH
Yes.

FATHER KENAN
Follow me.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Father Kenan leads both Derek and Elizabeth to the couch, where Charlie is lying down. Father Kenan grabs a couple of chairs and sets them next to the one he was sitting in.

FATHER KENAN
Sit.

They do as he says, walking to the chairs without question and taking their respective seats. Father Kenan then sits back in his seat.

FATHER KENAN (CONT’D)
Take my hands.

They do.

FATHER KENAN (CONT’D)
Bow your heads as a I pray. And whatever you do, where we go, don’t lose yourselves.

They follow his instructions. Elizabeth instantly drops her head and closes her eyes. Derek drops his head but steals a glance at Elizabeth.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
In the Name of Jesus Christ, we drive you from us, whoever you may be, unclean spirits, all satanic powers, all infernal invaders, all wicked legions, assemblies and sects. God the Father commands you. God the Son commands you. God the Holy Ghost commands you. Christ, God's Word made flesh, commands you. Begone, Satan, inventor and master of all deceit, enemy of man's salvation.

Items on the walls start shaking. Elizabeth and Derek try to keep their focus on the prayer and the chaos that is brewing around them. Charlie's breathing gets heavier and distinctly animalistic.

FATHER KENAN (CONT'D)
Stoop beneath the all-powerful Hand of God; tremble and flee when we invoke the Holy and terrible Name of Jesus, this Name which causes hell to tremble, this Name to which the Virtues, Powers and Dominations of heaven are humbly submissive, this Name which the Cherubim and Seraphim praise unceasingly repeating: Holy is the Lord, the God of Hosts.

EXT. "FOREST"

Elizabeth opens her eyes, standing amongst the trees. She looks around, slightly taken aback by the sudden change of environment, but quickly steels herself and marches forward. She catches a glimpse of Charlie running amongst the trees.

EXT. "FOREST"

Derek opens his eyes and finds himself lying down on the ground. He sits up and looks around the forested area. He sees Charlie looking from behind a tree. Charlie looks at him almost accusatory. Charlie then turns and runs away.

Derek follows.

EXT. “FOREST”

Father Kenan is walking amongst the forest, once again, in no particular pace. His expression is intent. He stops, looks around.

EXT. “FOREST”

Derek runs past the trees, looking for Charlie.

DEREK
Charlie!

He gets no response as he continues to run. Finally, he comes to a clearing, where he sees Charlie sitting on the ground, rocking back and forth, hugging himself.

DEREK (CONT’D)
(relief)
Charlie.

He walks towards the child, kneeling down in front of him. Derek examines Charlie.

DEREK (CONT’D)
Hey. Charlie. We’re here.

Charlie continues his silence.

DEREK (CONT’D)
Come on, buddy.

Derek doesn’t hear something behind, but, when it’s too late, he turns around and lets out a YELL.

EXT. “FOREST”

Elizabeth is running past the trees, desperation clear in her expression. Her focus jumps back and forth as she continues to run.

Suddenly, she sees Charlie, briefly running past some trees. She turns and runs after him.

ELIZABETH
Charlie!

She catches yet another glimpse of him disappearing behind a tree and increases her speed.

Finally, she clears past the tree and sees her son standing amidst a clearing, his back to her. She sees him and slows down, walking cautiously toward him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
(softly)
Charlie?

Elizabeth walks towards Charlie. Before she gets to him, he spins around to face her. His expression was one of anger and misery.

CHARLIE
You betrayed me.

ELIZABETH
What?

CHARLIE
You took dad away from me.

ELIZABETH
No...

CHARLIE
Don't lie. You won't let him see me.

ELIZABETH
It wasn't... That's not...

Elizabeth bites her lip, fighting emotion.

CHARLIE
You took him from me.

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry, Charlie. I know it's been hard.

CHARLIE
No. No, you don't know.

ELIZABETH
Please. Baby. I'll make it better. I know it was a mistake. But you have to bear with me. Please. Be patient. I promise you.

Charlie turns away, clearly seething with anger.

CHARLIE
You don't keep your promises.

ELIZABETH
I will on this one. I will. Sweetie. I will.

He looks like he's softening up a bit.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I've made some bad decisions. I've done some things that weren't in your best interests, even though I might have thought they were at the time. But I know better now. Okay?

He looks at her. There is still a trace of hurt in your eyes.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I'm not perfect, sweetie. But I try. I try my hardest. And I won't make this mistake again.

Charlie nods slowly. Suddenly, he has an expression of dawning awareness.

CHARLIE
Mom?

She takes a few steps towards her son. He looks directly at her, looking confused and sad.

ELIZABETH
Charlie?

She looks at him, then feels relief as she rushes to her son, embracing him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I love you, so much.

CHARLIE
I love you too, mom.

There's a moment of silence between the two before Charlie breaks the silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Mom?

ELIZABETH
Yes?

CHARLIE
I want to show you something.

ELIZABETH
Okay.

Charlie turns and takes her hand, leading her along, through the clearing and into a cluster of trees.

They clear some trees and revealed to Elizabeth is the slumped over form of Derek, his eyes wide, but his body unmoving.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
What--

CHARLIE
(happily)
Look what happened to Derek.

ELIZABETH
Oh, my God.

CHARLIE
(demonic voice #1)
And now you're both mine.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Father Kenan's eyes open. He looks around him, seeing that the two seats beside him are now empty. He looks down, first at Derek who is on the floor, eyes closed, seemingly asleep, then over to Elizabeth who looks exactly the same.

He then turns his gaze to Charlie, who is now sitting up, breathing heavily, his eyes open, and almost glazed over expression. Finally, Charlie's eyes come into focus and he looks right at Father Kenan. A beat passes.

CHARLIE
(demonic voice #2)
I should have known it was you. That it was you who thwarted the Church's best efforts. That it was you who planted your name with the mother.

Charlie looks down at both Derek and Elizabeth with a smile.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(demonic voice #2)
You have been my most loyal servant. And you have supplied me with two more willing souls.

Charlie's grin grows more wicked.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(demonic voice #2)
Shall we carry on with the plan then?

FATHER KENAN
Yes, master.

Father Kenan gives Charlie a reverential bow of the head.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK

Father Kenan and Charlie exit the house together, walking down the driveway, hitting the sidewalk, with no look back.

The last shot of the house is seen before;

FADE OUT